

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 MC-02 ACDA-05 PM-03

TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-02 OMB-01

/034 R

DRAFTED BY AF/S:DPNCHRISTENSEN:LOF

APPROVED BY AF/S - WPONEILL

EB/EWT - SGOODMAN

COMM - MLICHT

AF/I - JANDEREGG

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P R 182215Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL DURBAN PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 036427

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, ETRD, SF

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SALE OF SIKORSKY S-65 HELICOPTERS TO

SOUTH AFRICAN FIRM

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF SIKORSKY AIRCRAFT DIVISION OF UNITED AIRCRAFT HAVE CONTACTED DEPARTMENT CONCERNING POSSIBLE SALE OF FIVE S-65 HELICOPTERS TO COURT HELICOPTERS (FORMERLY COURT LINE HELICOPTERS) OF SOUTH AFRICA FOR USE IN MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE, SHIP TOWING, AND POLLUTION CONTROL. COURT REPORTEDLY HAS AUTHORITY TO ORGANIZE AND OPERATE SERVICE FOR SAG ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A. POLLUTION CONTROL IN EVENT OF OIL SPILLS FOLLOWING GROUNDING OR COLLISION OF SHIP TANKERS;

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B. TOWING TO PREVENT IMMINENT GROUNDINGS OR COL-

LISIONS;

C. LONG RANGE SEARCH AND RESCUE OF COMPLETE SHIP'S CREWS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AT SEA AS FAR OUT AS 600 MILES. SIKORSKY REPS STATE COURT PLANS STATION ONE S-65 EACH IN DURBAN, PORT ELIZABETH, AND WALVIS BAY AND TWO IN CAPE TOWN. THESE HELICOPTERS WOULD ALSO BE USED TO PROVISION PASSING SHIPS, ACCORDING TO SIKORSKY.

2. MILITARY VERSIONS OF S-65 INCLUDE US NAVY RH-53D MINE-

SWEEPING AND MULTI-MISSION HELICOPTER AND USAF HH-53C HEAVY-LIFT HELICOPTER. IN VIEW OF SAG CONTINUING INTEREST IN MINESWEEPING HELICOPTERS, WE BELIEVE COURT INTEREST IN S-65 REQUIRES CLOSE, DETAILED SCRUTINY BEFORE TENTATIVE SALES REQUEST BY SIKORSKY CAN RECEIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION. THEREFORE, WE WOULD APPRECIATE POSTS' RESPONSES (OR A SINGLE COORDINATED RESPONSE) SOONEST, WITH ALL AVAILABLE DETAILS FROM COURT AND ANY OTHER SOURCES TO EACH OF FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- A. TO WHAT USE WILL S-65 HELICOPTERS BE PUT WHEN NOT ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES MENTIONED IN PARA 1?
- B. WILL ACTIVE DUTY SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIST IN ANY WAY IN OPERATIONS OF S-65'S (I.E. CREW, MAINTENANCE, ETC)?
- C. WHO WILL SERVICE, MAINTAIN AND REPAIR S-65'S? WHO CURRENTLY PERFORMS SUCH SERVICES ON COURT'S EXISTING HELICOPTER FLEET?
- D. DOES COURT HAVE ANY INTENTION OF PURCHASING OTHER S-65 HELICOPTERS IN ADDITION TO FIVE ALREADY BEING DISCUSSED?
- E. WHAT SERVICES, IF ANY, HAS COURT PERFORMED IN PAST FOR SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY OR POLICE?
- F. DEPENDING ON RESPONSES TO ABOVE QUESTIONS, WOULD COURT BE WILLING TO FURNISH WRITTEN GUARANTEES THAT HELICOPTERS WOULD BE USED ONLY FOR PURELY COMMERCIAL PURPOSES AS MENTIONED IN PARA 1; WOULD NOT BE MAINTAINED, CREWED, OR SERVICED BY ANY BRANCH OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY; WOULD NOT BE BASED AT ANY MILITARY FACILITY AND WOULD NOT BE SOLD, LEASED OR OTHERWISE DISPOSED OF WITHOUT PRIOR CONFIDENTIAL

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USG APPROVAL?

3. FYI: S-65 COSTS \$6 MILLION AND IS LARGEST HELICOPTER MADE BY SIKORSKY END FYI. MAW

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALES, POLICIES, HELICOPTERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE036427
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DPNCHRISTENSEN:LOF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750058-0214
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750234/aaaabep1.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE SALE OF SIKORSKY S-65 HELICOPTERS TO SOUTH AFRICAN FIRM
TAGS: EAIR, ETRD, SF
To: DURBAN CAPE TOWN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006